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~~S-E-C-R-E-T~~COUNTRY East Germany

REPORT

TOPIC Koethen Airfield

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EVALUATION

PLACE OBTAINED

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DATE OF CONTENT

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DATE OBTAINED

PREPARED 13 May 1955

REFERENCES

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PAGES 6 ENCLOSURES (NO. & TYPE)

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REMARKS

This is UNEVALUATED Information

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1. The following air activity and aircraft were observed at Koethen airfield between 25 February and 1 April 1955:

On 25 February, 2 elements of two Il-28s crossed over Koethen. The 2 formations approached from the north at an altitude of about 5,000 meters at an interval of about 3 minutes. A distance of about one wing span was maintained between the aircraft of a formation. Two individual MiG-15s or U-MiG-15s flew banks between the two elements and approached the first aircraft of the first element and subsequently turned to the left or right. An air combat practice was presumably held. Between 2130 and about midnight, there was night flying. Only one MiG-15 or U-MiG-15 was seen aloft at a time. The aircraft had set position lights. The directional searchlight alternately operated from 1.5 minutes during which it made 10 to 12 rotations and then was switched off for 3.5 minutes.

25 and 26 February. High-altitude flights were made by MiG-15s or U-MiG-15s. The aircraft flew individually and in elements of two the latter with an interval and distance of about one wing span.

1 March. There were air-to-air firing practices by MiG-15s or U-MiG-15s. All aircraft were fitted with auxiliary fuel tanks. The MiG towing the air sleeve flew for about 1 hour in the area between Duebener Heide and Koethen at an altitude of about 2,000 meters. Firing practices by the individual aircraft lasted about 15 minutes. The MiGs flew a banked in front of the target-towing aircraft and subsequently attacked the air sleeve from the side. During each attack, 2 to 3 bursts of fire were given apparently from the aircraft cannons. These practices continued until 1600.

10 March. Twenty MiG-15s or U-MiG-15s from the eastern hangars were counted at the eastern end of the runway. At about 1230, about 25 flying personnel had fallen in presumably for a short briefing. Shortly afterwards,

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the red approach lights from the main marker to the end of the runway were switched on. An approach practice was apparently held. At about 1300, 6 MiG-15s or U-MiG-15s, including single and two-seater aircraft made individual flights of about 8 minutes duration.

11 March. At 0900, 17 MiG-15s or U-MiG-15s were parked at the eastern end of the runway. At 0915, an element of two MiG-15s or U-MiG-15s taxied from the western hangar to the take-off point and immediately took off in close order. After a flight of about 45 minutes duration, the two aircraft landed again at an interval of about 10 seconds. There was no air activity by the 17 aircraft parked at the take-off point. Visibility was limited to about 2 km.

12 March. Twenty MiG-15s or U-MiG-15s were parked at the take-off point at the western end of the runway. At about 0900, 8 aircraft were pushed out of the western hangar and parked in front of it. Ten aircraft, including about 4 two-seaters, made gliding flights. The aircraft approached the field at an altitude of about 2,500 meters and started gliding over the field. The aircraft flattened out of their glide at an altitude of about 500 meters. The single-seater aircraft were apparently flown by beginners. Three aircraft were aloft at the same time. Each aircraft made 5 to 6 glides during about 20 minutes. Take-offs and landings were made individually. Air-to-air firing was also practiced. A MiG-15 or U-MiG-15 towing an air sleeve and subsequently another MiG-15 or U-MiG-15 took off heading toward the east. After about 30 minutes, the MiG-15 without air sleeve landed while the target-towing aircraft remained aloft and waited for another MiG-15 to take off for firing practices. The MiG-15 with the air sleeve landed again after about 90 minutes. Formation flying and aerobatics were also seen. Several elements of two aircraft took off at irregular intervals in close order. They subsequently made flights at very high altitudes. One element practiced air combat at an altitude of 3,000 to 4,000 meters. These aircraft landed after about one hour. A total of 5 take-offs in elements of two were counted. One element of two Yak-11s took off three times for local flights. Air activity lasted until about 1630.

18 March. At about 0930, 17 MiG-15s or U-MiG-15s were pushed in front of the hangars. The take-off point was established at the eastern end of the runway. A radio truck with glass cupola and a rod antenna about 6 meters high was seen there. Two radio installations of one mast each were seen about 50 meters east of the radio truck about 50 meters apart. Both masts were not extended. One Kniferest and one Fishnet type radar were again seen in the northwestern corner of the field. The AA 4 MK 3-type radar set was seen at its previous location at the southern edge of the field. Two MiG-15s or U-MiG-15s were parked in front of the western hangar. Several test runs were made in front of the eastern hangars. At about 1130, the take-off point was removed because the weather deteriorated. At about 1530, all aircraft were again pushed into the hangars. There was no air activity.

21 March. The take-off point was established at the western end of the runway. Eighty percent of the aircraft revetments were occupied by MiG-15s or U-MiG-15s which were covered by camouflage nets. Several tank trucks, [redacted] and trucks, [redacted] all of which were camouflaged by branches were seen near the aircraft revetments. A radio installation of one mast, about 12 meters high, was seen at the southern edge of the field at the place where a Kniferest-type and a

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Fishnet-type radar set had previously been located. Individual MiG-15s or U-MiG-15s made local flights. At about 1130, an element of two MiG-15s or U-MiG-15s which were fitted with auxiliary fuel tanks landed. The aircraft had previously been parked in aircraft revetments. At about noon, air activity was discontinued because heavy snowfall set in.

22 March. A total of 19 MiG-15s or U-MiG-15s were counted. Part of the aircraft revetments had again been vacated. A radio truck with glass cupola was seen at the eastern end of the runway. At about 0900, 2 U-MiG-15s took off for individual local flights.

25 March. A total of 34 MiG-15s or U-MiG-15s, including 5 in front of the western hangar, were counted. The southeastern hangar was apparently empty. Five aircraft were parked in front of the northeastern hangar. Twenty-four MiG-15s or U-MiG-15s were involved in air activity. During the morning, 3 formations of four aircraft, all of which were fitted with auxiliary fuel tanks, took off in close order, at intervals of about 30 minutes. The formations disappeared toward the east and returned after about one hour. During the afternoon, air activity included local flights in close-order of one formation of four aircraft and 3 elements of two aircraft. The flight of the formation of four aircraft lasted 7 minutes. All the landings made showed skill. Throughout the day, 4 U-MiG-15s and 2 to 3 MiG-15s made the following practices: An element of two MiG-15s or U-MiG-15s took off and made a 20-minute flight in close order in the vicinity of the field. Several MiG-15s or U-MiG-15s took off individually for local flights of about 6 minutes duration. About 12 take-offs were made within an hour. A few aircraft made gliding flights near the field. Air activity was discontinued at about 1715.

1 April. Thirty-four MiG-15s or U-MiG-15s and 1 biplane were counted. There was no air activity except for the take-off by a biplane at 1345. At 1700, a siren sounded and 3 trucks mounting searchlights appeared. Two of the trucks were parked at the eastern end of the runway to the left and right of the runway and 1 truck was parked about 150 meters east of the road to Baasdorf in the extension of the runway. At about 1915, the runway lights were switched on and 5 MiG-15s or U-MiG-15s fitted with auxiliary fuel tanks individually took off from the east at intervals of 5 minutes. The aircraft immediately climbed steeply and disappeared toward the west. The landing flood lights were not in operation during the take-off. After about 5 minutes, 5 individual MiG-15s or U-MiG-15s crossed over the field at intervals of 5 minutes flying at very high altitudes. After about 25 minutes, the 5 aircraft approached individually from the east and landed at intervals of about 5 minutes. While flying still far beyond the outer marker beacon, the aircraft were apparently on the principal course of approach and, with considerably reduced speed, skillfully approached for landing without opening the throttle again. The landing floodlights were switched on for 2 to 3 minutes during each landing. The aircraft crossed over the landing floodlights at an altitude of about 10 meters. The lights were switched off when the aircraft touched ground. The landing lights were not in operation, and it could not be seen where they were fitted on the aircraft. The aircraft taxied as far as the center of the runway to the point where the taxiway branches off to the north. There they turned to the north. Subsequently individual local flights of 5 to 6 minutes duration were made by about 10 MiG-15s or U-MiG-15s. Ten to 12 take-offs were made within an hour. An aircraft took off after the previous aircraft had rolled to a stop. It was clearly seen that the aircraft were occupied by a crew of two both sitting in tandem fashion. At each landing, the landing floodlights were switched on while the landing lights were not in operation. All landings were carried out with skill. During air activity, the directional searchlight at the northern edge of the field about 100 meters north of the quartering area was in operation.

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2. One Kniferest-type and one Fishnet-type radar set was located 20 to 30 meters apart north of the taxiway between the two last aircraft revetments in front of the former southwestern hangar. A Fishnet-type radar set was seen for the first time about 50 meters southwest of the aircraft revetments south of the runway. The AA 4 MK 3-type radar set was still located at the southern edge of the field.²
3. The AA gun emplacement in the southeastern corner of the field was still occupied by 6 x 37-mm AA guns which were covered by tarpaulins. The personnel was doing athletics.³
4. Trucks [redacted] were seen in traffic at the field. [redacted]

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5. The following air activity and aircraft were observed at the field between 1 March and 15 April 1955:

1 March. At 1300, one MiG-15 or U-MiG-15 towing an air sleeve took off. Subsequently, the sleeve target was attacked by individual MiG-15s or U-MiG-15s. There was night flying until about midnight. A railroad tank car from which fuel was drained was seen on the spur track at the fuel dump.

2 March. From morning to midnight, there was air activity by MiG-15s or U-MiG-15s.

23 March. There was intensive activity at the field. Two MiG-15s or U-MiG-15s covered with camouflage nets were parked in the aircraft revetments at the eastern edge of the field. A rolled up, apparently large, camouflage net was seen on the ground next to one of the aircraft revetments. The aircraft revetments in the southeastern corner of the field were occupied by one MiG-15 or U-MiG-15 each. All aircraft were also covered by camouflage nets. At the dispersal area of the alert flight, 6 MiG-15s or U-MiG-15s were made ready for take-off. About 3 men were working on each aircraft. Several trucks shuttled between the eastern hangars and the dispersal area of the alert flight. They were apparently occupied by personnel when proceeding to the aircraft and returned empty. About 4 tank trucks were seen between the aircraft revetments. One tank truck was filled at the fuel dump and subsequently was parked between the aircraft revetments in the northeastern corner of the field. Two radio trucks were also parked between the aircraft revetments and the landing field, 15 to 20 meters apart from each other. One of the radio trucks was fitted with a rod antenna, the other with an umbrella-shaped antenna. The latter had a glass cupola as described previously. No personnel was seen in the glass cupola. The other truck appeared to be occupied. No air activity was observed.

25 March. MiG-15s or U-MiG-15s practiced intensive local and formation flying. At about 1300, a formation of 4 MiG-15s or U-MiG-15s crossed over the field at an altitude of 800 to 1,000 meters, flew a left bank and landed.

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26 March. Individual local flights were made. The aircraft took off and landed at regular intervals. Thirteen MiG-15s or U-MiG-15s landed within 15 minutes. One MiG-15 or U-MiG-15 approached the runway in east-west direction at about 10 meters above the ground over the gap in the fence. A second MiG-15 or U-MiG-15 apparently cut his approach pattern to short and was therefore only about 300 meters behind the preceding MiG. The first MiG touched ground and taxied regularly but this second MiG had to go around again.

30 March. No air activity was observed. About 57 MiG-15s or U-MiG-15s were parked in front of the hangars and south of the flight control station.

12 April. At 1220, 2 MiG-15s or U-MiG-15s were made ready for take-off at the dispersal area of the alert flight. Personnel were seen at the aircraft and on the aircraft wings. Approximately 1 meter from the rear of the aircraft a two-wheel cart was seen. A tank truck drove up to the aircraft. Four men were engaged in work on each aircraft. Another tank truck was seen between the aircraft revetments in the southeastern corner of the field. There was only light air activity. While one MiG-15 or U-MiG-15 landed it was observed that the brake flaps formed an angle of about 35° with the fuselage. They were about 50 cm long and 15 cm high and were supported by a prop.

13 April. Between 2030 and about midnight, there was night flying.

14 April. Beginning at 1000, there was air activity by MiG-15s or U-MiG-15s. Between 1220 and 1400, 8 MiG-15s landed. One of the aircraft did not extend its landing flaps. Two aircraft took off.

15 April. There was no air activity. Four MiG-15s or U-MiG-15s were parked on the dispersal area of the alert flight. Two tank trucks, 1 truck, 1 red fire truck, and 1 truck with van-like superstructure without visible antenna were seen near the aircraft between the aircraft revetments.

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6. One Kniferest-type radar set was located south of the western hangar. ~~The Fishnet~~-type radar set previously observed near there, was no longer seen after 13 April. One Fishnet-type radar set was located next to the AA 4 MK 3-type set at the southern edge of the field between the aircraft revetments along the fence.²
7. All passengers in a train to Berlin were checked by a detail of 6 men between Dessau and Michendorf. The train consisted of 5 coaches and 1 diner. The checking personnel were concerned with notes of all kinds carried by the passengers rather than about the baggage. One notebook filled with shorthand writing owned by one of the travellers was read page by page.

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1. Comment. Koethen airfield is believed to be still occupied by one fighter regiment and one reconnaissance regiment equipped with MiG-15s. There was intensified air activity by the cadre personnel and the exchange personnel which is being retrained. A total of 57 MiG-15s or U-MiG-15s were seen at the field. MiG-15 was last seen in Zerbst in 1952, U-MiG-15 is reported for the first time. All other aircraft were previously observed at Koethen. The practice alert was probably connected with a larger exercise, since army exercises have been conducted at the same time.
2. Comment. One Fishnet-type and one AA 4 MK 3-type radar set and one radio station of one mast were seen at the southern edge of the field. Only one Kniferest-type radar set was located at the northern edge of the field. The radio truck, the radio truck with glass cupola and rod and umbrella-shaped antenna and 2 radio installations of one mast were repeatedly seen near the aircraft revetments in the northeastern corner of the field.
3. Comment. The AA gun emplacement was reported previously.

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